

We claim:

1 1. A customer acquisition method comprising the steps of:
2 selecting a customer account record of a first entity, said customer account record
3 including a customer identifier;
4 determining if an individual indicated by said customer identifier is a customer of
5 a second entity; and
6 providing an acquisition offer to said individual to pay an amount if said
7 individual becomes a customer of said second entity.

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1 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of determining whether said
2 individual satisfies predefined criteria for receiving said acquisition offer.

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1 3. The method of claim 2, wherein said predefined criteria includes geographic
2 conditions.

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1 4. The method of claim 2, wherein said predefined criteria includes demographic
2 conditions.

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1 5. The method of claim 2, wherein said predefined criteria includes financial
2 conditions.

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1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein said customer account record further indicates an
2 amount due and said method further comprises the step of determining whether said amount due
3 satisfies predefined criteria for receiving said acquisition offer.

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1 7. The method of claim 6, wherein said amount due is less than or equal to a
2 maximum amount specified by said second entity.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein said individual must agree to remain a customer
2 of said second entity for a predefined minimum period of time.

1 9. The method of claim 1, wherein said acquisition offer is provided to said
2 individual in a billing statement of said first entity.

1 10. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of determining if said
2 customer has accepted said acquisition offer.

1 11. A customer acquisition system comprising:
2 a memory for storing a customer account record of a first entity, said customer
3 account record including a customer identifier;
4 a processor operatively coupled to said memory, said processor configured to:
5 select a customer account record;
6 determine if an individual indicated by said customer identifier is a customer of a
7 second entity; and
8 provide an acquisition offer to said individual to pay an amount if said individual
9 becomes a customer of said second entity.

1 12. A customer acquisition system comprising:
2 means for selecting a customer account record of a first entity, said customer
3 account record including a customer identifier;
4 means for determining if an individual indicated by said customer identifier is a
5 customer of a second entity; and
6 means for providing an acquisition offer to said individual to pay an amount if
7 said individual becomes a customer of said second entity.

1 13. An article of manufacture comprising:
2 a computer readable medium having computer readable code means embodied
3 thereon, said computer readable program code means comprising:

4 a step to select a customer account record of a first entity, said customer account
5 record including a customer identifier;

6 a step to determine if an individual indicated by said customer identifier is a
7 customer of a second entity; and

8 a step to provide an acquisition offer to said individual to pay an amount if said
9 individual becomes a customer of said second entity.

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1 14. A customer acquisition method comprising the steps of:

2 establishing predefined conditions for offering to pay an amount to an individual
3 provided said individual becomes a customer of a first entity; and

4 providing said predefined conditions to a second entity to determine whether said
5 second entity should provide said acquisition offer to said individual.

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1 15. The method of claim 14, wherein said predefined conditions are selected from the
2 group consisting of geographic conditions, demographic conditions, financial conditions and a
3 maximum offer amount.

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1 16. The method of claim 14, wherein said individual owes an amount due to said
2 second entity and wherein said amount due is less than or equal to a maximum amount.

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1 17. The method of claim 14, wherein said individual must agree to remain a customer
2 of said service provider for a predefined minimum period of time.

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1 18. The method of claim 14, wherein said acquisition offer is provided to said
2 individual in a billing statement of said second entity.

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1 19. A customer acquisition system comprising:
2 a memory for storing a customer account records;
3 a processor operatively coupled to said memory, said processor configured to:

4 establish predefined conditions for offering to pay an amount to an individual
5 provided said individual becomes a customer of a first entity; and
6 communicate said predefined conditions to a second entity to determine whether
7 said second entity should provide said acquisition offer to said individual.

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1 20. A customer acquisition system comprising:
2 means for establishing predefined conditions for offering to pay an amount to an
3 individual provided said individual becomes a customer of a first entity; and
4 means for communicating said predefined conditions to a second entity to
5 determine whether said second entity should provide said acquisition offer to said individual.

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1 21. An article of manufacture comprising:
2 a computer readable medium having computer readable code means embodied
3 thereon, said computer readable program code means comprising:
4 a step to establish predefined conditions for offering to pay an amount to an
5 individual provided said individual becomes a customer of a first entity; and
6 a step to communicate said predefined conditions to a second entity to determine
7 whether said second entity should provide said acquisition offer to said individual.

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1 22. A method for paying an amount due indicated on a billing statement, comprising
2 the steps of:
3 receiving an acquisition offer to have at least a portion of said amount due paid by
4 a third party in exchange for becoming a customer of said third party;
5 indicating acceptance of said acquisition offer for said third party to pay at least a
6 portion of said amount due; and
7 becoming a customer of said third party.

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1 23. The method of claim 22, wherein said amount due is less than or equal to a
2 maximum amount specified by said second entity.

1 24. The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of agreeing to become a
2 customer of said third party for a predefined minimum period of time.

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1 25. The method of claim 22, wherein said acquisition offer is provided in a billing
2 statement.

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1 26. The method of claim 22, wherein said step of indicating acceptance further
2 comprises the step of utilizing acceptance indicia on said billing statement.